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Seoul Takes Olympian Steps to Prevent Terrorism

By SUSAN CHIRA

Special to The New York Times

SEOUL, South Korea, June 30 — As concern grows about possible terrorist attacks by North Korean agents or the Japanese Red Army before and during the Summer Olympics, this near-fortress city is buttressing its already formidable defenses.

Helmeted soldiers armed with machine guns march stiffly past arriving passengers at Kimpo Airport. Photos of suspected terrorists are handed out to hotel clerks. Anti-terrorist squads screen every car going in and out of the Olympic Village.

Since Palestinian terrorists killed is-

raeli athletes in Munich in 1972, no Olympics has been free of the specter of terrorism. But the shadow looms larger over these Games, which open in September, because of North

Korea's implacable hostility to the South and its continued threats to disrupt the Olympics.

South Korean, American and Japanese terrorism experts, diplomats and police interviewed said they had no hard evidence of terrorist plans. Based on observations of recent terrorist group movements and statements, however, they are guarding against attacks by agents of North Korea, the Japanese Red Army and Middle Eastern terrorists.

"We cannot ignore the threats, but we are prepared to meet and deter

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them," said Gen. Yook Wan Sik, chief of security coordination and control for the Olympics.

American officials who have reviewed Olympic security measures agree. "My own sense is that within Korea, we are going to have a safe Olympics," said Robert E. Lamb, Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security. "The Koreans have put a great deal of thought into it and the whole country is being mobilized."

Security Force of 100,000

General Yook commands a special task force of 100,000 policemen and soldiers who will patrol the Olympic Stadium, the Olympic Village and 300 other sites. Anti-terrorist squads drilled for the cameras recently, sliding down ropes into the Olympic Stadium, firing at mock terrorists all the while.

They boast submachine guns complete with silencers and laser-aiming

'The whole country is being mobilized,' a U.S. official says.

devices; electronic stethoscopes to pick up sounds of hidden time bombs; even 64 dogs trained to sniff out explosives that elude detection by machine.

South Korea's 620,000-member armed forces and its national police force, 120,000 strong, will be on full alert, as will the 40,000 American troops stationed here. An electrified fence rings the entire Olympics, with three concentric fences surrounding the athletes' village.

To guard against North Korean landings by sea or air, South Korea's armed forces will be joined by the United States, which has pledged to make available aircraft carriers, Air Force planes based in Japan and Marine amphibious battalions based on Okinawa.

Making Airports More Secure

Officials are also trying to insure that terrorists do not board or plant explosives on airplanes bound for Seoul. Counter-terrorism and aviation security officials from eight Asian-Pacific countries met here recently to draw up recommendations to tighten security. Most visitors to the Games will pass through the airports represented by the nations at the meeting, which included South Korea, Japan, the United States, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines.

While specific recommendations were not disclosed, L. Paul Bremer, United States Ambassador-at-Large for Counter-Terrorism, said the group discussed ways to make airports more secure, to tighten screening of passengers, to detect explosives in baggage and cargo and to maintain on-board security once a plane takes off.

North Korea and the Japanese Red Army are seen as the main threats.

South Korea has computerized profiles of 8,000 international terrorists and 600 international terrorist groups. But a State Department official acknowledged that it would be difficult to keep out determined terrorists.

"The possibility of screening the millions of people who come in here is not that good," he said. "The real safeguard is making sure they don't get explosives and weapons into an airport. Although plastic explosives will get through metal detectors, there are ways to detect them. You can remove batteries, circulate profiles of suspicious travelers and suspicious items — you just have to make sure airport people are alert and watching for danger signs."

A Dim View of Batteries

Removing batteries has become a preoccupation since last November, when a self-avowed North Korean agent planted a bomb ignited by batteries on a Korean Air plane bound for Seoul, killing 115 people. That incident, and the bomb that killed five people at Kimpo Airport just a week before the opening of the 1988 Asian Games, provide haunting reminders that even such a security-conscious country as South Korea is continually vulnerable to terrorism.

"There is no such thing as 100 percent security," Mr. Bremer said. He and General Yook, among other security officials, believe that North Korea is anxious to avoid being blamed for any direct attack on the Olympics, particularly because two of its allies, the Soviet Union and China, will be taking part. Therefore, most security officials discount the possibility of an actual invasion, or the use of recently deployed surface-to-air missiles trained on Kimpo Airport.

According to a senior State Department official, however, North Korea could act before the Olympics to provoke an incident in the Demilitarized Zone, which might kill soldiers but not civilians and could frighten tourists from the Games.

The re-emergence of the Japanese Red Army also alarms security officials. General Yook, among other officials, said he was worried that the Red Army might link up with North Korea through the Red Army Faction, a splinter group based in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang. Since last November, the police have arrested four members of the Japanese Red Army or the Red Army Faction — two in Japan, one in Manila and one in New Jersey.

Red Army Emerged in 1960's

The Red Army, which emerged in Japan in the late 1960's, has been implicated in the April 15 car bombing in Naples that killed five people outside

an American military club. Italian police announced recently that they had matched fingerprints found on a car rental form with those of Junzo Okudaira, a Red Army member. After years of quiescence, the Japanese Red Army began to surface again two years ago, and has since claimed responsibility for several attacks on American and Japanese embassies in Rome and Jakarta, Indonesia.

Members of the Red Army Faction fled to North Korea in 1970 after hijacking a Japan Air Lines plane. According to Japanese police, however, some members have recently left Pyongyang and traveled through Asia and Eastern Europe.

Police examinations of the passports of arrested Japanese Red Army and Red Army Faction members show that they were in several cities — including Beijing and Hong Kong — at the same time, indicating that members of the two groups may have met. "The fact that the hijacking group has been able to leave North Korea indicates that there at least has to be a tacit understanding" on the part of North Korea that the two groups might team up, said a Japanese diplomat here.

According to the Japanese police, the Red Army has an active network of supporters, and has had the benefit of the \$6 million ransom the Japanese Government paid to recover hostages in the Red Army's 1977 hijacking of a Japan Air Lines plane in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Iranian and P.L.O. Groups

"It seems as though the Red Army has a broad base of supporters who give them real passports issued by the Japanese authorities, and some may have had plastic surgery," General

Yook said. "But we are training our immigration officials how to examine suspicious passports, we are cooperating with Japanese police, and we have devices to detect bombs. If they somehow get into Korea, any visitors with a clear purpose will be referred to our special police force. They will be checked up in hotels, and the staff is trained to watch out for them during check-in."

During the airport security conference, Mr. Bremer said he had also briefed security officials about Iranian

and Palestinian terrorist groups who might want to take advantage of the Olympic spotlight to pursue their own political agendas. He said, however, that he had no clear evidence to indicate that such groups were targeting the Olympics.

The Japanese police and a State Department official also expressed concern that security measures in South Korea could prove so daunting that terrorists might choose to attack pre-Olympic athletic training camps, such

as those in Honolulu or several cities in Japan.

But there is one group that no one seriously believes poses a threat to the Games — students. Despite vivid television pictures of firebomb-throwing students and reports of anti-Americanism on the rise, students have not singled out tourists or individual Americans as targets. While students may battle the police in one section of town, a few minutes away Koreans go about their daily business unscathed.

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If nations consulted psychologists, North Korea would almost certainly be diagnosed as psychotic. Time and again, it has proved itself to be an outlaw nation—kidnapping and killing on foreign soils in defiance of the most basic tenets of international law. Now, the North's repeated threats to "disrupt" the Seoul Olympic Games—presumably by terrorist or mili-

Asia

By Paul Wadden
And Stuart Pardau

tary attack—make a global blueprint to curb Olympic terrorism all the more urgent, for history suggests that Pyongyang has the means and will to deliver on its threat. This was the concern behind last week's meeting in Seoul of government security officials from eight Asian nations and the U.S., and representatives of 13 airlines that fly into South Korea.

Even a cursory review of North Korea's previous acts of terrorism suggests ample cause for alarm. In 1968, North Korean commandos infiltrated Seoul and were halted only after a deadly exchange of fire at the gates of the presidential manor. Five years ago, a North Korean bomb killed 17 high-ranking South Korean government officials who were on a state visit to Rangoon, Burma. Former President Chun Doo Hwan's late arrival saved his life. Late last year, in one of the North's most barbaric acts to date, Pyongyang agents blew up a Korean Air jetliner, killing all 115 passengers and crew.

In the past, analysts have expressed puzzlement, even disbelief, at North Korea's disdain for even the most fundamental codes of civilized behavior. Over the years, North Korean soliders have hacked to death with tree-trimming axes members

of the U.S. truce-keeping forces in the armistice village of Panmunjom. In one of its more bizarre exploits, North Korea's espionage agency even kidnapped from Hong Kong a leading South Korean film director and his actress wife, apparently under orders from Kim Jong Il, the son and designated heir of North Korean ruler, Kim Il Sung. (The younger Mr. Kim, a movie buff, reportedly hoped to enliven the North's moribund film industry through the abductions.)

This pattern of reckless—even psychotic—behavior can be explained at least in part by the intense jealousy Pyongyang holds toward the South. Despite generous aid from Russia and China, North Korea is an economic basket case. South Korea, by contrast, boasts a gross national product six times larger than the North's, and its foreign trade is 20 times as great.

By inevitably showcasing the differences between the two nations, the Olympics will add insult to injury. Awarded to Seoul seven years ago, the Summer Games are widely regarded as South Korea's coming-of-age achievement. Much as the 1964 Tokyo Olympics signaled Japan's emergence as a developed nation, the South hopes the Games will herald its own entry into the club of first-rate economic powers. Pyongyang would like nothing better than to rain on Seoul's parade.

Although security around Seoul is tight, it is far from foolproof. No city of 10 million people can be made invulnerable to terrorist attack during an event of Olympic proportions, and officials have conceded that South Korea is virtually defenseless against possible missile attacks on civilian aircraft using Kimpo Airport, the main entry point for the Olympics. Indeed, the bombing that killed five people there on the eve of the 1986 Asian Games demonstrates just how vulnerable the airport is. It's particularly worrisome now that the North has deployed Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles that bring the airport within striking distance.

Seoul's Olympian Security Threat

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High-level South Korean and U.S. military alerts coupled with U.S. aircraft carriers off the North Korean coast should discourage Pyongyang from launching a direct military assault during the Olympics. The recent South Korean-Japanese accord to beef up Japan's naval presence in the Sea of Japan and tighten security at Japanese international airports on outbound flights also will help. And South Korean officials are counting on the presence of the Soviets and Chinese at the Games to serve as a deterrent to any attack.

Yet troop readiness and military contingency plans are seldom effective in preventing—or responding to—terrorist attacks on civilians. The South Korean and U.S. governments may be unable to respond if the link between the terrorists and their sponsor is not immediately clear. Or, they may be unwilling to respond if the available responses seem excessive given the scale of the provocation.

Rather than focus on unilateral and bilateral responses, world leaders must realize that Olympic terrorism is an international problem that demands an international solution. A global policy forged for the Seoul Games would not only make this Summer Olympics safer, but would also reduce the risks at future Olympiads.

The following proposals could create a basic framework to achieve these aims:

- The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council should develop a plan for the use of collective force against any nation that sponsors or abets terrorism at the Games. Such a measure falls under the auspices of collective global security. A U.N. force that deals specifically with Olympic security should be established.

- Nations that send terrorists to the Olympics certainly shouldn't be allowed to also send their high-jumpers. Any nation that sponsors Olympic terrorism should be permanently barred from participation in the Games. Such a ban would be lifted only when a new regime came to power

and there was overwhelming evidence that the new government would no longer sponsor terrorist acts.

- In advance, an international consensus should be reached on the proper economic sanctions to impose against perpetrators of Olympic terrorism as well as the protocol for the confiscation of their overseas assets to compensate the host city and the victims of the attack.

- In instances where the links between a terrorist act and a particular nation are not immediately clear, the proposed U.N. Olympic force should have the right to seek and arrest suspects. Those charged with crimes can be brought to trial in the courts of the country where the act was committed or at the International Court of Justice.

Although these steps are by no means a guarantee against terrorism at future Olympics, they can help deter terrorism of the most dangerous and sophisticated kind, i.e., that masterminded and abetted by central governments. They are an improvement over the current formula, which simply places the burden of Olympic security entirely on the host nation and its allies.

The Olympics are meant to be a moment when the nations of the world put aside the politics of rancor and fear in favor of peaceful pastimes. In practice, however, modern Olympiads often have been a forum used to express political grievances and to propound nationalistic sentiments, sometimes of the most perverse kind. World leaders can begin to bring the Games closer to their original and noble purpose by building a consensus against Olympic terror and the taking of innocent lives.

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